

The epistle of Imām Abū Hanīfah to Imām ‘Uthmān al-Battī

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

من أبي حنيفة إلى عثمان البتي: سلامٌ عليك، فإني أحمدُ إليك اللهَ الذي لا إلهَ إلا هو: أما بعدُ فإني أوصيك بتقوى الله وطاعته، وكفى بالله حسيباً وجازياً.

From Abū Hanīfah to ‘Uthmān al-Battī:

Peace be upon you, I praise Allāh, whom there is no Allāh other than him. I advise you to have Taqwā in Allāh ﷻ and obey Him ﷻ and He ﷻ is sufficient as a reckoners and compensators.

بلغني كتابك، وفهمتُ الذي فيه من نصيحتك وحفظك لنا. وقد كتبت أنه دعاك إلى الكتاب بما كتبه حرصك على الخير والنصيحة، وعلى ذلك كان موضعه عندنا.

Your letter has reached me, and I have understood what is in it [his writing] in terms of your advice and concern for us. You have written that it was your eagerness for good and advice which had pushed you to write the letter which you have written and according to that was its place with us.

كتبت تذكر أنه بلغك أني من المرجئة، وأني أقول: مؤمن ضال، وأن ذلك يشق عليك. ولعمري ما في شيء باعد عن الله تعالى عذر لأهله، ولا فيما أحدث الناس وابتدعوا أمرٌ يهتدى به، ولا الأمر إلا ما جاء به القراء. ودعا إليه محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم، وكان عليه أصحابه حتى تفرق الناس، وأما ما سوى ذلك فبتدع ومحدث، فافهم كتابي إليك، وأعلم أنه لولا رجاء أن ينفعك الله به لم أتكلف الكتاب إليك، فاحذر رأيك على نفسك، وتخوف أن يدخل الشيطان عليك. عصمنا الله وإياك بطاعته، ونسأله التوفيق لنا ولك برحمته.

You mentioned in your writing that it has reached you that I am from the Murji'ah and that I say 'a Deviant Believer'¹, you also mentioned that this distressed you. I swear there is no excuse in something which distances [one] from Allāh for its people and neither in something which the people create and innovate. There's no actual matter (guidance) except what the Qur'ān has brought, what the Prophet ﷺ called to and what his noble companions were upon until the people divided. As for what is besides that, it is emergent and innovative.

I urge you to understand what I am writing to you, and know that if it wasn't for my hope that Allāh ﷻ will benefit you by the means of this. Be careful about your opinion [turning] against you. Fear that the devil (Shayṭān) may enter upon you. May Allāh ﷻ protect us and you by granting us his obedience and we ask Him for the Tawfīq (enablement) for us and you.

ثم أخبرك أنّ النَّاسَ كانوا أهلَ شركٍ قبلَ أن يبعثَ اللهُ تعالى محمداً صلى اللهُ عليه وسلم ، فبعثَ محمداً يدعوهم إلى الإسلام، فدعاهم إلى أن يشهدوا أنه لا إلهَ إلا اللهُ وحده لا شريكَ له، والإقرار بما جاء به من اللهِ تعالى.

I move on to tell you that the people before Allāh ﷻ sent the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ were upon Polytheism (Shirk, meaning they were from the idolaters). Then Allāh ﷻ sent the Prophet ﷺ calling them to Islām (Monotheism). He called them to bear witness that there is no Allāh but Allāh and he has no partners, and to confess (whilst believing) in what he ﷺ brought from Allāh ﷻ.

وكان الداخلُ في الإسلام مؤمناً بريئاً من الشرك ، حراماً مالهُ ودمه، له حقُ المسلمين وحرمتهم، وكان التاركُ لذلك حينَ دعا إليه كافراً بريئاً من الإيمان، حلالاً مالهُ ودمه، لا يُقبلُ منه إلا الدخولُ في الإسلام أو القتلُ.

¹ He used this as a phrase which he will expand on later on in this epistle

Thus meaning whoever entered Islām was a believer, free from polytheism and his blood and possessions became inviolate. He was given the right and protection of Muslims. As for the one who negated Islām after he was called to it (i.e. the Hujjah was established) then they become Infidels (Kuffār) Free from Faith (Īmān). As for their possession and blood they become lawful to the Muslims. Nothing is accepted of them except one of two, accepting Islām or Death.

إِلَّا مَا ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى فِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ إِعْطَاءِ الْجِزْيَةِ، ثُمَّ نَزَلَتْ الْفَرَائِضُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى أَهْلِ التَّصَدِيقِ.

This is of course is except for the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitāb) whom Allāh ﷻ mentioned about them their exemption due to them paying tribute money (jizyah). Then the obligations were revealed for the People of Belief (Ahl Al-Tasdīq).

فَكَانَ الْأَخْذُ بِهَا عَمَلًا مَعَ الْإِيمَانِ وَلِذَلِكَ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: ﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ﴾ وَقَالَ: ﴿وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا﴾ وَأَشْبَاهُ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ.

Thus the adopting of the laws had become a work of Faith (Īmān) hence Allāh ﷻ said:

“Those who believe and do good”²

and He ﷻ said,

“The one who believes in Allāh and does good”³

And other similar expressions in the Qur’ān.

فَلَمْ يَكُنِ الْمَضِيعُ لِلْعَمَلِ مُضِيْعًا لِلتَّصَدِيقِ. وَقَدْ أَصَابَ التَّصَدِيقَ بَغَيْرِ عَمَلٍ. وَلَوْ كَانَ الْمَضِيعُ لِلْعَمَلِ مُضِيْعًا لِلتَّصَدِيقِ لَانْتَقَلَ مِنْ اسْمِ الْإِيمَانِ وَحُرْمَتِهِ بِتَضْيِيعِهِ الْعَمَلَ كَمَا أَنَّ

² Qur'an Ar-Ra'd, 13

³ Qur'an At-Taghābun, 9

النَّاسَ لَوْ ضَيَّعُوا التَّصَدِيقَ لَانْتَقَلُوا بِتَضْيِيعِهِ مِنْ اسْمِ الْإِيمَانِ وَحُرْمَتِهِ وَحَقِّهِ، وَرَجَعُوا إِلَى حَالِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّرْكِ.

Thus, the one who disregards the action would not be disregarding belief (Tasdīq) whilst he had already attained belief without the action. And if the person disregarded the action would be considered its protection by disregarding the action just like the people who were to disregard the belief would move away by disregarding it from the name of belief (Īmān), its protection and right and consequently return to their state what they were upon [before], meaning Shirk.

وَمَا يُعْرَفُ بِهِ اخْتِلَافُهُمَا أَنَّ النَّاسَ لَا يَخْتَلِفُونَ فِي التَّصَدِيقِ. وَلَا يَتَفَاضِلُونَ فِيهِ. وَقَدْ يَتَفَاضِلُونَ فِي الْعَمَلِ. وَتَخْتَلِفُ فَرَائِضُهُمْ.

One of the ways by which this may be known is that the people are not different when it comes to belief (Īmān), nor do they excel over each other, whilst they may excel in comparison to each other in action and their obligations differ.

وَدِينُ أَهْلِ السَّمَاءِ وَدِينُ الرُّسُولِ وَاحِدٌ. فَلِذَلِكَ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ﴾.

Thus, it is known that the religion of the inhabitants of the heavens and the religion of the Messengers is one. Hence Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

**“He has ordained for you ‘believers’ the Way which He decreed for Noah, and what We have revealed to you ‘O Prophet’ and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, ‘commanding:’
“Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.”⁴**

⁴ Qur'an Ash-Shūrā, 13

واعلم أن الهدى في التصديق بالله ورُسُلِهِ ليس كالهدى فيما اقترَضَ من الأعمال. ومن أين يشكُلُ ذلك عليك؟ وأنت تُسمِّيهِ مؤمناً وهو جاهلٌ بما لا يعلمُ من الفرائضِ فلا بدَّ من أن تُسمِّيهِ مؤمناً بتصديقه، كما سماه اللهُ تعالى في كتابِهِ وأن تُسمِّيهِ جاهلاً بما لا يعلمُ من الفرائضِ. وهو إنما يتعلمُ ما يجهلُ.

Know that the guidance that comes from believing in Allāh and his messengers is nothing like the guidance from compulsory actions. From where (how) is this confusing for you? You call a man a believer whilst he is ignorant of what is obligatory upon him, therefore you must call him a believer for what he affirms (taṣdīq) as Allāh ﷻ called him a believer in his book; and you call him an ignorant for what he doesn't know of the obligatory actions when he is just learning what he is ignorant of.

فهل يكونُ الضالُّ عن معرفةِ الله تعالى ومعرفةِ رسوله كالضالِّ عن معرفةِ ما تعلَّمه النَّاسُ وهم مؤمنون؟

So would the one who failed to recognise Allāh ﷻ and His messengers be the same as the one who has failed to understand what people have learnt whilst they are believers?

وقد قال الله تعالى في تعليمه الفرائضَ : ﴿يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾. وقال: ﴿أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى﴾

Allāh ﷻ said in His teaching of the obligations:

“Allāh makes ‘this’ clear to you so you do not go astray. And Allāh has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things.”⁵

and He said,

⁵ Qur'an Nisā, 176

“So if one of the women forgets, the other may remind her.”⁶

وقال: ﴿فَعَلْتُهَا إِذَا وَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ﴾ يعني من الجاهلين.

“I did it then, lacking guidance.”⁷

meaning, from the ignorants.

والْحُجَّةُ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَالسُّنَّةِ عَلَى تَصْدِيقِ ذَلِكَ أَبِينُ وَأَوْضَحُ مِنْ أَنْ تُشْكَلَ عَلَى مِثْلِكَ،
أَوَلَسْتَ تَقُولُ : مُؤْمِنٌ ظَالِمٌ، وَمُؤْمِنٌ مُذْنِبٌ، وَمُؤْمِنٌ مُخْطِئٌ، وَمُؤْمِنٌ عَاصٍ، وَمُؤْمِنٌ جَائِرٌ؟
هَلْ يَكُونُ فِيمَا ظَلَمَ وَأَخْطَأَ مَهْتَدِيًّا فِيهِ مَعَ هُدَاهُ فِي الْإِيمَانِ، أَوْ يَكُونُ ضَالًّا عَنْ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي
أَخْطَأَهُ؟

The Proof (Hujjah) from the Book of Allāh (Qur’ān) and guidance of His Messenger ﷺ (Sunnah) to confirm that the above is so apparent and so clear that it should not be confusing for someone of your likes.

Do you not say: “Unjust believer, sinful believer, an erring believer, an uncouth believer and a cruel believer?”

And is it that one can be rightly guided in wickedness or errors? Just as he is rightly guided in Faith (Īmān)? Or will one be led astray from the truth while committing errors?

وقول بني يعقوب لأبيهم: ﴿إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ الْقَدِيمِ﴾، أَتُظَنُّ أَنَّهُمْ عَنُوا: إِنَّكَ لَفِي كُفْرِكَ
الْقَدِيمِ؟ حَاشَا لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَفْهَمَ هَذَا، وَأَنْتَ بِالْقُرْآنِ عَالِمٌ.

As for what the sons of Jacob (Ya’qūb) said to their father:

“You are definitely still in your old delusion.”⁸

⁶ Qur’an Al-Baqarah, 282

⁷ Qur’an Shu’arā, 20

⁸ Qur’an Yūsuf, 95

Do you think they meant “You are in your old disbelief (Kufr)?”
Allāh forbid that you should understand it so and you are from the
Learnt in the Book of Allāh (Qur’ān).

وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ الْأَمْرَ لَوْ كَانَ كَمَا كُتِبَتْ بِهِ إِلَيْنَا: أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا أَهْلَ تَصَدِيقٍ قَبْلَ الْفِرَاطِ، ثُمَّ
جَاءَتِ الْفِرَاطُ، لَكَانَ يَنْبَغِي لِأَهْلِ التَّصَدِيقِ أَنْ يَسْتَحِقُّوا اسْمَ التَّصَدِيقِ بِالْعَمَلِ حِينَ
كَلَّفُوا بِهِ، وَلَمْ تَفْسَرْ لِي مَا هُمْ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا دِينُهُمْ، وَمَا مُسْتَقَرُّهُمْ عِنْدَكَ قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ؟ إِذَا هُمْ لَمْ
يَسْتَحِقُّوا الْاسْمَ إِلَّا بِالْعَمَلِ حِينَ كَلَّفُوا.

Know if the matter was as you had written to us:

“That the masses had been people of affirmation (belief) before the
obligations, then the obligations came.”

It would have been necessary for the people of affirmation (belief) to
be entitled the title of affirmation through actions once they were
obligated to do the actions.

You did not explain to me what they’re upon, what their Religion
(Dīn) was nor what your position was, if they did not deserve the title
except through doing the actions once they were addressed with the
obligations.

فَإِنْ زَعَمْتَ أَنَّهُمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ تَجْرِي عَلَيْهِمْ أَحْكَامُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَحُرْمَتُهُمْ، صَدَقْتَ، وَكَانَ صَوَابًا، لِمَا
كُتِبَتْ بِهِ إِلَيْكَ. وَإِنْ زَعَمْتَ أَنَّهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَقَدْ ابْتَدَعْتَ وَخَالَفْتَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
وَالْقُرَّاءَانَ. وَإِنْ قُلْتَ بِقَوْلٍ مِنْ تَعَنَّتْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبِدْعِ، وَزَعَمْتَ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِكَافِرٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنٍ،
فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ هَذَا الْقَوْلَ بَدْعٌ وَخِلَافٌ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَصْحَابِهِ.

If you say, they are believers who are governed by the rulings of the
Muslims and are under their protection, then you are truthful, and
what you say would be correct, and because of what I wrote to you.
As for if you say that they are Infidels (Kuffār), then you have
innovated and contradicted the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the Qur’ān. Finally

if you take the position of the People of Innovation (Ahl Al-Bida'), and you claim that he is neither a disbeliever nor a believer, then know that this saying is an innovation and is in complete disagreement with the Prophet ﷺ and his companions.

وقد سَمِيَ عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، وَعُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، أَوْ أَمِيرُ
الْمُطِيعِينَ فِي الْفَرَائِضِ كُلِّهَا يَعْنُونَ؟ وَقَدْ سَمِيَ عَلِيٌّ أَهْلَ حَرْبِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّامِ مُؤْمِنِينَ، فِي
كِتَابِ الْقَضِيَّةِ. أَوْ كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ وَهُوَ يَقْتُلُهُمْ؟ وَقَدْ أَقْتَلَ أَصْحَابُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ، وَلَمْ تَكُنِ الْفِتْنَتَانِ مُهْتَدِيَتَيْنِ جَمِيعًا، فَمَا اسْمُ الْبَاغِيَةِ عِنْدَكَ؟

‘Alī - may Allāh be pleased with him - was called the Commander of the Faithful, and Sayyidunā ‘Umar - may Allāh be pleased with him - was called the Commander of the Faithful, or did they mean the Commander of the Obedient in all of the obligatory duties. ‘Alī called the people that went to war against him from Syria⁹ believers, in the book Al-Qadhiyyah. Were they guided while he was still fighting them? The companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ were fought, and the two groups were not all guided [at the same time], so who is a transgressor to you?

فَوَاللَّهِ مَا أَعْلَمُ مِنْ ذُنُوبِ أَهْلِ الْقِبْلَةِ ذَنْبًا أَعْظَمَ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ، ثُمَّ دِمَاءُ أَصْحَابِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ
الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ خَاصَّةً. فَمَا اسْمُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ عِنْدَكَ؟ وَلَيْسَا مُهْتَدِيَيْنِ جَمِيعًا.

For by Allāh, I do not know of the sins of the People of the Qiblah (Ahl Al-Qiblah) greater than murder, especially the bloodshed of the companions of Muḥammad ﷺ in particular. So what is the name of both sides according to you whilst they both cannot be guided at the same time?

⁹ In the arabic it says Shām

فَإِنْ زَعَمْتَ أَنَّهُمَا مُهْتَدَيَانِ جَمِيعاً ابْتَدَعْتَ، وَإِنْ زَعَمْتَ أَنَّهُمَا ضَالَّانِ جَمِيعاً ابْتَدَعْتَ، وَإِنْ قُلْتَ: إِنَّ أَحَدَهُمَا مُتَهْدٍ فَمَا الْآخَرُ؟ فَإِنْ قُلْتَ: اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ، أَصَبْتَ. تَفْهَمُ هَذَا الَّذِي كَتَبْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكَ.

If you claim that they are both guided, then you have innovated, and if you claim that they are both misguided, then you have innovated. As for if you say: One of them is rightly guided, then what is the other? If you say: Allāh knows best, you are right. Try to understand what I have written to you.

وَأَعْلَمُ أَنِّي أَقُولُ: أَهْلُ الْقِبْلَةِ مُؤْمِنُونَ، لَسْتُ أَخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ بِتَضْيِيعِ شَيْءٍ مِنَ الْفَرَائِضِ، فَمَنْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى فِي الْفَرَائِضِ كُلِّهَا مَعَ الْإِيمَانِ كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ عِنْدَنَا، وَمَنْ تَرَكَ الْإِيمَانَ وَالْعَمَلَ كَانَ كَافِراً مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ الْإِيمَانَ وَضَيَّعَ شَيْئاً مِنَ الْفَرَائِضِ كَانَ مُؤْمِناً مُذْنِباً، وَكَانَ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى فِيهِ الْمَشِئَةُ إِنْ شَاءَ عَذِبَهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ غَفَرَ لَهُ، فَإِنْ عَذِبَهُ عَلَى تَضْيِيعِهِ شَيْئاً فَعَلَى ذَنْبٍ يَعَذِّبُهُ، وَإِنْ غَفَرَ لَهُ فَذَنْباً يَغْفِرُ.

Thus now I say: The People of Qiblah (Ahl Al-Qiblah) are believers, and I do not nullify their faith by missing any of the obligatory duties. For the one that obeys Allāh by doing all that he is obligated with faith (Īmān), he is from the people of Jannah for us. As for he who abandons belief and actions he is a Disbeliever (Kāfir) from those of Hell (Jahannam). As for whoever has faith and neglects something of the obligatory duties, he is a sinful believer, and Allāh has the final say for him, if He wills He will punish him, and if He wills He will forgive him. If He punishes him for missing something, then he is punished for a sin, and if he is forgiven, then he is forgiven for a sin.

وَإِنِّي أَقُولُ فِيمَا مَضَى مِنْ اخْتِلَافِ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيمَا كَانَ بَيْنَهُمْ: اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ. وَلَا أَظُنُّ هَذَا إِلَّا رَأْيَكَ فِي أَهْلِ الْقِبْلَةِ، لِأَنَّهُ أَمْرُ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَمْرُ حِمْلَةِ السَّنَةِ وَالْفِقْهِ.

Thus and I say about the past differences of the companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ regarding what was between them: “Allāh knows best.” And I do not think this is anything other than your opinion of the People of Qiblah (Ahl Al-Qiblah), as this is the way of the companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and the way of the inheritors of the Sunnah and Jurisprudence.

زَعَمَ أَخُوكَ عَطَاءُ بْنُ أَبِي رِبَاجٍ، وَنَحْنُ نَصِفُ لَهُ هَذَا أَنَّ هَذَا أَمْرُ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَرَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.

Your brother 'Atā bin Abī Rabāḥ believed whilst we were describing this to him, that this is the opinion of the companions of the Messenger ﷺ and may Allāh ﷻ be pleased with them.

وَزَعَمَ سَالِمٌ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ: أَنَّ هَذَا أَمْرُ أَصْحَابِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Sālim believed from what he has narrated from Sa'īd b. Jubayr, that this is the opinion of the companions of Muḥammad ﷺ.

وَزَعَمَ أَخُوكَ نَافِعٌ أَنَّ هَذَا أَمْرُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

Your brother Nāfi' believed that this is the opinion of 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar, may Allāh ﷻ be pleased with him.

وَزَعَمَ ذَلِكَ أَيْضاً عَبْدُ الْكَرِيمِ عَنْ طَاوُسٍ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ هَذَا أَمْرُهُ.

And also, 'Abdul Karīm believed from what he has narrated on the authority of Tāwūs on the authority on Ibn 'Abbās may Allāh ﷻ be pleased with him, that this is his opinion.

[وحماد عن إبراهيم رحمة الله عليهم، أن هذا كان أمرهم.] وقد بلغني عن علي بن طالب رضي الله تعالى عنه حين كتب القضية أنه يُسمي الطائفتين مؤمنين جميعاً.

[Ḥammād [Ibn Abī Sulaymān also claimed so] about Ibrāhīm [An-Nakha'ī] may the mercy of Allāh ﷻ be upon them, that this is their opinion.]¹⁰ It has reached me that 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, may Allāh ﷻ be pleased with him, when he wrote in his writing (Qāḍhiyyah), that he named both the groups [of the war] all believers.

وزعم ذلك أيضاً عمر بن عبد العزيز كما رواه من لقيه من إخوانك فيما بلغني عنك ثم قال: ضعوا لي في هذا كتاباً، ثم أنشأ يعلّمه ولده، ويأمرهم بتعليمه - عليه جلساءك رحمة الله تعالى - فإنك بمكان من المسلمين، واعلم أن أفضل ما علمتم، وتعلموا كيف تعلموا الناس السنة، ينبغي أن تعرف من أهلها الذي ينبغي لهم أن تعلموها.

'Umar b. 'Abd Al-'Azīz also claimed this as it has been narrated by those who have met him from your brothers in which it has reached me about you. Then he said: 'Produce a writing in this regard for me'. Then he started teaching this to his son, and he [also] ordered them to teach [those after]. Teach it to those [who are] in your sittings (i.e. lessons) may Allāh ﷻ have mercy on you, for you are in a place of Muslims and know that the virtuous of what you teach is that you teach the people the Sunnah. It is suitable for someone like you to recognise who amongst the people is suitable to study this (i.e. the Sunnah).

وأما ما ذكرت من اسم المرجئة فما ذنب قوم تكلموا بعدل، وسمّاهم أهل البدع بهذا الاسم؟ ولكنهم أهل العدل وأهل السنة، وإنما هذا الاسم سمّاهم به أهل الشنآن، ولعمري ما يهجن عدلاً لو دعوت إليه الناس فوافقتوك عليه أن يسميهم أهل شنآن المرجئة، فلو كانوا فعلوا ذلك كان هذا الاسم بدعة، فهل يهجن ذلك ما أخذت به من أهل العدل؟

¹⁰ This wording was found in the manuscript of Kashf Al-Āthār Ash-Sharīfah by Imām Al-Hārithi

As for what you have mentioned about the term of Murji'ah, what is the sin of the people who speak with justice and they are named by the people of Innovation (Ahl Al-Bid'ah) with this term? Rather they are the people of justice and Sunnah. And this term was only given to them by the people of hatred. I swear, the people of hatred naming the people of Sunnah Murji'ah, does not affect the truth if you called the people to it and they agreed with you. If they did so then this term would be an innovation [itself]. So does that disparage what you took from the people of justice?

ثُمَّ إِنَّهُ لَوْلَا كَرَاهِيَةُ التَّطْوِيلِ، وَأَنْ يَكْثُرَ التَّفْسِيرُ لَشَرَحْتُ لَكَ الْأُمُورَ، وَلَكِنْ أَجَبْتُكَ بِمَا كَتَبْتَ بِهِ إِلَيَّ، إِنْ أَشْكَلَ عَلَيْكَ شَيْءٌ أَوْ أَدْخَلَ عَلَيْكَ أَهْلُ الْبِدْعِ شَيْئًا فَأَعْلَمْنِي أَجَبَكَ فِيهِ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، ثُمَّ لَا ءَالُوكَ وَنَفْسِي خَيْرًا وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ.

Had it not been for [my] dislike of prolonging (this letter), and for the explanation to be excess, I would have explained things to you [with more detail], nevertheless I have answered you on what you wrote to me. If there is anything difficult for you, may Allāh have mercy on you from what I have written, or if the people of innovation and those who left the book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ enter upon you with anything, then let me know (i.e. ask me) and I will answer you about it (the matter) if Allāh, the Most High, wills. And in the end, I do not fall short in asking goodness for you and I, Allāh is the helper alone.

لَا تَدْعُ الْكِتَابَ إِلَيَّ بِسَلامِكَ وَحَاجَتِكَ، رَزَقَنَا اللَّهُ مَنْقَلِبًا كَرِيمًا وَحَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً، وَسَلَامُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ. وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى ءَالِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

Do not hold back from writing to me with your greetings and your needs. May Allāh grant us and you an honorable place of return and a good life. The peace of Allāh, his mercy and blessings be upon you and all praise be to Allāh the Lord of the universe and blessings be

upon our master Muhammad ﷺ and upon all his family and companions.

END OF LETTER

‘Uthmān bin Muqsim Al-Kindī said: “I was with ‘Uthmān Al-Battī when the book of Nu’mān came, and he read it to us.”¹¹

And he says in another narration: “I was with ‘Uthmān Al-Battī when the book of Nu’mān came, so he read it to us and said, 'If this is Irjā', then I have been a Murji' for about 60 years without knowing it.”¹²

¹¹ Kashf Al-Āthār Ash-Sharīfah

¹² Kashf Al-Āthār Ash-Sharīfah